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SUMMARY. USSR 1977 FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS, WHICH HAVE
JUST BEEN PUBLISHED, SHOW SOVIET EXPORTS OF 33.3 BILLION
RUBLES (UP 18.7 PERCENT) AND IMPORTS OF 30.1
BILLION (UP ONLY 4.7 PERCENT) FOR A TOTAL TRADE TURNOVER
OF 63.4 BILLION, AN INCREASE OF 11.6 PERCENT. THE USSR'S

TRADE SURPLUS OF 3.2 BILLION RUBLES IS A COMPLETE TURN-AROUND FROM 1976'S DEFICIT OF 710 MILLION RUBLES. TWO-WAY TRADE WITH WESTERN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WAS STAGNANT, THAT WITH "SOCIALIST COUNTRIES" GREW BY 15 PERCENT, AND THAT WITH LDC'S BY 27.3 PERCENT. OUR CALCULATIONS, BASED ON SOVIET FIGURES, INDICATE A 1977 HARD-CURRENCY DEFICIT OF 2.1 BILLION RUBLES (\$2.9 BILLION) COMPARED TO 3.7 BILLION RUBLES (\$4.9 BILLION) IN 1976.

THUS USSR SIGNIFICANTLY CUT IMPORTS FROM ITS MAJOR WESTERN TRADING PARTNERS IN 1977, ACCORDING TO SOVIET FIGURES; ITALY AND JAPAN ARE THE EXCEPTIONS, AND THE U.S. WAS THE WORST HIT. EXPORTS FROM WEST GERMANY WERE DOWN 9.9 PERCENT, FRANCE 2.1, THE U.K. 8.2, AND THE U.S. 37.1 PERCENT. ALTHOUGH WESTERN STATISTICS MAY DISPUTE ITS MAGNITUDE, THE SOVIET BALANCE OF TRADE WITH WESTERN DC'S SHOWS A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT OVER LAST YEAR BECAUSE THE CUT IN IMPORTS WAS COUPLED WITH A GENERAL INCREASE IN SOVIET EXPORTS TO THESE COUNTRIES.

WITHIN THE CONSIDERABLE GROWTH IN TRADE WITH "SOCIALIST COUNTRIES," ESPECIALLY CEMA COUNTRIES, THE GREATER INCREASE IN SOVIET EXPORTS THAN IMPORTS THIS YEAR LED TO EVEN GREATER SOVIET SURPLUSES WITH MOST OF THESE COUNTRIES THAN LAST YEAR. THESE AMOUNT TO SHORT-TERM CREDITS BY THE USSR. WHILE HELPFUL, AND PERHAPS IMPORTANT IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMMEDIATE SITUATION, THEIR FUTURE REPAYMENT MAY BE A CAUSE FOR SOME CONCERN FOR BOTH SIDES IN THE DEAL, AS WELL AS FOR EASTERN EUROPE'S WESTERN TRADING PARTNERS. (ONLY CUBA AND ROMANIA ENJOYED SURPLUSES IN THEIR TRADE WITH THE SOVIET UNION IN 1977 ACCORDING TO SOVIET FIGURES.)

THE CONSIDERABLE SURGE IN TRADE WITH THE LDC'S INCLUDED GREAT GROWTH IN SOVIET EXPORTS AND THUS A LARGE SOVIET SURPLUS WITH THEM. SOVIET TRADE-BY-COUNTRY STATISTICS DO NOT, HOWEVER, PROVIDE A CLEAR PICTURE OF WHERE THE 2.3 BILLION RUBLE SURPLUS COMES FROM. END SUMMARY.

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1. JUST PUBLISHED SOVIET STATISTICS FOR SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE IN 1977 SHOW A TOTAL FOREIGN TRADE TURNOVER OF 63,353.2 MILLION RUBLES (\$86,160.4 MILLION AT AVERAGE EXCHANGE RATE ONE RUBLE EQUALS \$1.36), AN INCREASE OF 11.6 PERCENT OVER 1976. A MUCH FASTER GROWTH IN EXPORTS (18.7 PERCENT) OVER IMPORTS (4.7 PERCENT) LED TO A TURN-AROUND IN THE OVERALL SOVIET BALANCE OF TRADE, WITH A 3,159.4 MILLION RUBLE SOVIET SURPLUS IN 1977, COMPARED TO A

710.6 MILLION RUBLE DEFICIT IN 1976. WHEREAS SOVIET TRADE WITH THE GROUP OF COUNTRIES DESIGNATED "INDUSTRIALIZED CAPITALIST COUNTRIES" REMAINED STAGNANT, INCREASING ONLY ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT, TRADE WITH "SOCIALIST COUNTRIES" GREW BY 15 PERCENT AND WITH LDC'S BY 27.3 PERCENT. PERCENTAGE SHARE OF "SOCIALIST COUNTRIES" GREW FROM 55.6 IN 1976 TO 57.3 IN 1977, OF CEMA COUNTRIES FROM 50.8 TO 52.5, OF LDC'S FROM 11.5 TO 13.2, THE PERCENTAGE SHARE OF WESTERN DC'S FELL FROM 32.9 TO 29.6. THE SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE RELATIVE DECREASE IN TRADE WITH WESTERN DC'S WAS THE 8.3 PERCENT DECLINE IN SOVIET IMPORTS FROM THESE COUNTRIES.

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2. TRADE WITH INDUSTRIALIZED CAPITALIST COUNTRIES:

ALTHOUGH SOVIET EXPORTS TO THESE COUNTRIES INCREASED BY 12.5 PERCENT (A RATE CONSIDERABLY LOWER THAN THAT FOR EXPORTS TO THE OTHER TWO CATEGORIES), THE 8.3 PERCENT DECLINE IN IMPORTS JUST ABOUT OFFSET THE INCREASE IN EXPORTS. OF MAJOR WESTERN TRADING PARTNERS, THE UK, THE FRG, FRANCE AND THE US ALL SAW A DECLINE IN THEIR EXPORTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO THE USSR. THE MOST STRIKING OF THESE DECLINES WAS THE 37.1 DECREASE IN US EXPORTS. SOVIET STATISTICS SHOW IMPORTS FROM THE US OF R1261.5 MILLION (\$1715.6 MILLION). AT R374.5 MILLION (\$509.3 MILLION), BRITISH EXPORTS WERE DOWN BY 8.2 PERCENT. THE WEST GERMAN DECREASE IN EXPORTS WAS EVEN GREATER: AT R1780 MILLION (\$2420.8 MILLION) IT WAS DOWN BY 9.9 PERCENT. FRENCH EXPORTS SUFFERED LESS, REACHING R904 MILLION (\$1229.4 MILLION), DOWN BY 2.1 PERCENT. THE ONLY MAJOR WESTERN DC TRADING PARTNERS ABLE TO INCREASE THEIR EXPORTS TO THE USSR WERE ITALY (BY 11.4 PERCENT) AND JAPAN (BY 5.3 PERCENT). ITALIAN EXPORTS REACHED R790.3 MILLION (\$1074.8 MILLION) AND JAPANESE EXPORTS R1444.4 MILLION (\$1964.4 MILLION). SINCE THE SOVIETS INCREASED THEIR OWN EXPORTS TO ALL OF THESE COUNTRIES, THE SOVIET TRADE BALANCE IMPROVED WITH ALL OF THESE COUNTRIES EXCEPT ITALY. THE SOVIETS HAD A SURPLUS OF R583.3 MILLION (\$793.3 MILLION) WITH THE UK AND OF R300.2 MILLION (\$408.3 MILLION) WITH ITALY. THEIR TRADE DEFICIT WAS R436.5 MILLION (\$593.6 MILLION) WITH THE FRG, R84.1 MILLION (\$114.4 MILLION) WITH FRANCE, R591 MILLION (\$803.8 MILLION) WITH JAPAN, AND R989.9 MILLION (\$1346.3 MILLION) WITH THE US. THE SOVIET TRADE DEFICIT WITH ALL WESTERN DC'S IS SHOWN AS R1112.6 MILLION (\$1513.1 MILLION). THIS IS A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT OVER THE 1976 DEFICIT OF R2989.3 MILLION (\$4066.3 MILLION), THE SOVIET HARD-CURRENCY TRADE DEFICIT IN 1977 WAS R2111.0 MILLION (\$2,871.0 MILLION) COMPARED TO R3738.2 MILLION (\$4934.4 MILLION) IN 1976. (THIS IS CALCULATED FROM INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY STATISTICS FOR THOSE COUNTRIES WITH WHICH WE ARE AWARE SOVIETS CONDUCT TRADE IN HARD CURRENCIES.)

3. TRADE WITH "SOCIALIST COUNTRIES:" THE INCREASE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TRADE WITH CEMA COUNTRIES WAS SLIGHTLY GREATER (15.4 PERCENT) THAN FOR "SOCIALIST COUNTRIES" AS A WHOLE (15.0 PERCENT). GROWTH IN SOVIET EXPORTS WAS SEVERAL

PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER THAN IN IMPORTS, AND THE SOVIET SURPLUS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY (23.3 PERCENT): IT WAS R1931.2 MILLION FOR THE GROUP AS A WHOLE, OF WHICH R1656.4 MILLION WAS WITH CEMA COUNTRIES. AMONG MAJOR CEMA TRADING PARTNERS, GROWTH IN TRADE WAS GREATEST WITH ROMANIA (26.6 PERCENT) AND LOWEST WITH THE GDR (12.2 PERCENT). THE PERCENTAGE INCREASE WAS HIGHER THAN AVERAGE WITH BULGARIA (15.4) AND POLAND (15.9) AND LOWER THAN AVERAGE WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA (12.6). ROMANIA CONTINUED AS THE ONLY EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRY WITH A SURPLUS IN ITS TRADE WITH THE USSR (R18.4 MILLION). EACH OF THE OTHERS INCREASED ITS TRADE DEFICIT WITH THE USSR. THESE DEFICITS WERE (IN MILLIONS OF RUBLES): BULGARIA - 164.1; HUNGARY - 106.4; GDR - 595; POLAND - 323.8; CZECHOSLOVAKIA - 243.5. POLAND AND THE GDR ALSO HAD SIZEABLE DEFICITS LAST YEAR. TRADE WITH CUBA, ALSO A CEMA MEMBER, INCREASED BY 20.2 PERCENT TO R3452.1 MILLION, AND ALTHOUGH SOVIET EXPORTS INCREASED SLIGHTLY FASTER THAN IMPORTS, THE CUBAN TRADE SURPLUS WITH THE USSR INCREASED TO R182.3 MILLION.

4. ALTHOUGH TRADE WITH THE PRC DECLINED BY 21 PERCENT TO R248.5 MILLION, THE BALANCE IN 1977 WAS FAVORABLE TO THE SOVIET UNION, BUT ONLY BY R11.7 MILLION. THERE WAS ALSO A LARGE INCREASE (36.4 PERCENT) IN TRADE WITH VIETNAM TO R404 MILLION, LARGELY DUE TO A DOUBLING OF SOVIET IMPORTS. TRADE WITH YUGOSLAVIA GREW BY 12.3 PERCENT TO R2045.6 MILLION, BUT THE INCREASE IN SOVIET EXPORTS (18.7 PERCENT) FAR SURPASSED THAT IN IMPORTS (5.8 PERCENT).

5. TRADE WITH LDC'S: ALTHOUGH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE GROWTH IN SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE IN 1977 WAS IN TRADE WITH THE LDC'S, THIS GROWTH WAS FROM A RELATIVELY LOW BASE. MORE INTERESTING IS THE SKEW IN THIS GROWTH: SOVIET EXPORTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GREW BY 42.7 PERCENT AND IMPORTS BY ONLY 6.8 PERCENT. THUS,

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THE SOVIET SURPLUS IN TRADE WITH THE LDC'S GREW FROM R935
MILLION IN 1976 TO R2340.8 MILLION IN 1977. THE SOURCE OF
THIS UPSURGE IN THE SOVIET SURPLUS WITH THESE COUNTRIES
IS NOT IMMEDIATELY APPARENT FROM SOVIET STATISTICS. ALTHOUGH
TRADE WITH IRAN GREW BY 59 PERCENT TO R707.5 MILLION,
RESULTING IN A SOVIET SURPLUS OF R 140 MILLION, THERE ARE NO
OTHER EXAMPLES OF SUCH MAGNITUDE. MEANWHILE THERE ARE
LARGE SOVIET DEFICITS WITH SUCH COUNTRIES AS INDIA,
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MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, LIBYA, ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL.
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6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH IT IS EVIDENT FROM SOVIET
STATISTICS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE ABLE TO IMPROVE THEIR
BALANCE-OF-TRADE POSITION WITH ALL THREE CATEGORIES OF
COUNTRIES, THE MOST STRIKING DEVELOPMENT IN SOVIET FOREIGN
TRADE IN 1977 IS THE DECLINE IN IMPORTS FROM WESTERN DC'S,
THE ACCOMPANYING INCREASE IN EXPORTS TO THESE SAME
COUNTRIES, AND THE RESULTING DECREASE IN THE SOVIET TRADE .
DEFICIT WITH THEM. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (REFS A, B AND

C), THERE ARE GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN RECONCILING WESTERN STATISTICS WITH SOVIET ONES. FOR EXAMPLE, STATISTICS SUPPLIED BY THE FRENCH AND BRITISH EMBASSIES HERE SHOW GROWTH RATES IN EXPORTS TO THE USSR OF 37.5 PERCENT AND 45 PERCENT, RESPECTIVELY, AS OPPOSED TO SOVIET STATISTICS SHOWING THE RATES AS -2.1 AND -8.2. LATEST WEST GERMAN STATISTICS AVAILABLE TO US (JAN.-NOV.) SHOW A DECLINE OF ONLY 5.8 PERCENT INSTEAD OF 9.9 PERCENT. ALTHOUGH EXCHANGE RATE FLUCTUATIONS MIGHT EXPLAIN SOME OF THIS DIFFERENCE, THEY WOULD NOT ACCOUNT FOR SUCH LARGE DISCREPANCIES. US TRADE STATISTICS ALSO DO NOT AGREE WITH SOVIET STATISTICS; THEY SHOW A DECLINE OF ONLY 26.5 PERCENT AS OPPOSED TO 30.5. NEVERTHELESS, EVERYONE IS AGREED THAT THE SOVIETS IMPROVED THEIR BALANCE-OF-TRADE POSITION WITH THE WESTERN DC'S, AND DECREASED THEIR HARD-CURRENCY-TRADE DEFICIT TO A SIGNIFICANT EXTENT. THE QUESTION THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED IS BY HOW MUCH. UNFORTUNATELY, INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE DOES NOT ANSWER THAT QUESTION.

7. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN STEADILY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPROVING ITS BALANCE OF TRADE WITH THE CEMA COUNTRIES OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS. IN A SYSTEM OF PLANNED TRADE WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO LEAD TO BALANCED TRADE, AT LEAST OVER A TWO OR THREE YEAR PERIOD, THIS REPRESENTS A TREND RUNNING COUNTER TO THEORY. THERE MAY, OF COURSE, BE OTHER FACTORS, SUCH AS INVISIBLES, WHICH RENDER SUCH A TREND SUSTAINABLE OVER THE LONG RUN. BUT IF THIS IS SO, WE HAVE TOO LITTLE INFORMATION TO CONFIRM IT. FROM THE LITTLE WE ARE ABLE TO GLEAN HERE, THIS TREND SHOULD EVENTUALLY REVERSE ITSELF (REFTEL D, PARA 2). YET, GIVEN THE PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION OF MOST EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, WHICH ARE ALSO HEAVILY IN DEBT TO THE WEST, THE PROSPECT OF HAVING TO REPAY PRESENT SOVIET TRADE CREDITS MUST CAUSE CONCERN NOT ONLY TO THE EAST EUROPEANS THEMSELVES, BUT ALSO TO THEIR DEBTORS. TOON

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